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ABSTRACT

In 1989, Australia embarked on a concerted effort to eliminate the inequalities between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the rest of Australia's population with respect to access to, participation in, and outcomes from all levels of education and training. All Australian governments (federal, state, and territory) adopted the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy, which is based on the principle of indigenous involvement in education decision making. Since its adoption, the new national policy has facilitated a visible shift in attitudes and actions on the part of indigenous and nonindigenous people alike, and technical and further education institutes' and universities' accommodation of indigenous students' needs and aspirations has improved significantly. For the first time, parity between indigenous and nonindigenous people is within sight in some sectors and some age groups. However, more remains to be done in relation to achieving the policy's goals regarding parity of educational outcomes between indigenous and nonindigenous peoples. The most critical issue for future improvements is to create conditions encouraging indigenous people to achieve appropriate outcomes in education and training. (The report contains 19 references. Appended is the text of the Aboriginal Education [Supplementary Assistance] Act of 1989.) (MN)

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Making a difference

The impact of Australia's indigenous education and training policy

CHRIS ROBINSON

LIONEL BAMBLETT

NCVER

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The front cover shows a part of a painting by Sarah Napangati Bruno, Paul Tjampitjinpa Bruno, Monica Nangala Robinson and Victor Tjungurrayi Robinson from Walungurru (Kintore), Northern Territory.

The authors of this book acknowledge the generosity of the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs in allowing the use of the painting. The complete painting is, in many ways, the story of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' experience of education and their hope for the future.

Ngurra walytjangka:
Yirrtilingku yaṉangu tjuṯa nyinanyi ngurrangka, walypala wiyangka. Pipirri wiima tjuṯa nintirringanyi tjukurrpa, wangka, tulku, ngurraku, kapaḻikuṉu kamu tjamukuṉu.

The centre [of the picture]- in our original country:
The yaṉangu of long ago, before the walypala came, are living in their land. The children learn about their dreamings, their language, their ceremonies, their country - all this is passed on to them from their grandmothers and grandfathers.

Yalinytjarra wiluṟarralku:
Ratjintayimi yaṉangu tjuṯa ngurrpa nyinanyi. Walypala tjuṯangku nintiṉi pipirri wiima tjuṯa tjanampa wangkaku kaltjaku. Yaṉangu kutjupa tjuṯa nganti nyinanyi.

To the north-west:
In the 'ration times' [up to and including the 1960s], the yaṉangu are sitting, not knowing. The walypala are teaching the [yaṉangu] children about their [non-indigenous] language and [non-indigenous] culture. The other yaṉangu people are sitting 'behind', at the back [and not involved].

Yalintjarra kakarralku:
Yaṉangu maṉkurrpalpi nintirringanyi walypalakuṉu wangkaku kaltjaku , kuulaku, kanya yaṉangu kutjupa tjuṯaya ngurrpa nyinanyi. Pipirri kamu yaṉangu tiṉa kutjupa tjuṯa nintirringanyi tjurratjaku pitulaku.

To the north-east:
[In the 1970s], although the others continue in ignorance of walypala ways, a few yaṉangu eventually learn about walypala language and culture and [start to work in] schools. At the same time some of the children and the adults together learn about grog and petrol sniffing.

Yulparirra kakarralku:
Kuwarri, yaṉangu kamu walypala tjungulpi nyinarra warrkarrinyi.

To the south-east:
Today, yaṉangu and walypala have joined, living and working together.

Yulparirra wiluṟarralku:
Tjamu kapaḻi tjuṯangku manta wituṉi. Tjana watjaṉi yaaltji-yaaltji kuulangka nintintjaku. Tjana watjaṉi yaṉangu kuultiji tjuṯangku nintintjaku pipirri tjuṯa. Yaṉangu kamu walypala kuultiji tjuṯa tjungurringkula wangkanyi. Walypala mayutju tiṉa paluru yiyaṉi walypala kutjupa tjuṯa warrkarrinytjaku yaṉanguwana.

To the south-west:
[In the future] our grandmothers and grandfathers are holding on to [and not forgetting] the land. They are telling us how to teach in school. They are saying that yaṉangu schoolteachers should instruct the children. The yaṉangu and walypala teachers are together working out [how to operate the school]. The boss [or the government] is sending other walypala teachers to work in the school with yaṉangu people.

Watjaṉilatju:
Waḻungurralakampa yaṉangu tjuṯa kuulaku nintirringkula mayutju nyinaku. Palunyatjanu pipirri tjuṯa kuulangka tjarrparra nintilingkurriku walypalakunu wangkaku kaltjaku, yaṉangukuṉu ngurraku, walytjaku, tulkuku, tjukurrpakuṯarra. Walypala kuultiji mayutju kuulangka nyinanyingka, pipirri tjuṯa tjana ngurrpa kutu nyinaku.

Conclusion:
At Walungurru the yaṉangu people now know about schools - they are going to control their own school. With yaṉangu people in charge the children will be able to come to school and learn properly, learn both walypala language and culture, and yaṉangu culture and tradition. If the walypala remain solely in charge, our children will not learn properly at all.

Making a difference

The impact of Australia's indigenous education and training policy

CHRIS ROBINSON

LIONEL BAMBLETT

NCVER

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Preface

ACHIEVING REAL AND lasting improvements in the socio-economic position of indigenous Australians is an issue which has perplexed successive Australian governments for much of the 20th Century. Policies have usually led to disappointing results and critics have attacked politicians, bureaucracies and indigenous peoples for the failures.

This report shows that a concerted national policy effort can make a real difference if there is widespread agreement amongst all levels of government and if there is widespread community support for reform amongst indigenous and non-indigenous Australians alike.

Making a difference: The impact of Australia's indigenous education and training policy is a good news story that offers real hope for the future.

Things are not yet right, but in just one decade Australia has gone a long way towards achieving parity in participation in education and training amongst indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. The national indigenous education and training policy that was adopted a decade ago has created the conditions for real progress. The educational outcomes attained by indigenous students have also improved greatly, but a significant gap between the outcomes achieved by indigenous and non-indigenous people still remains.

Two key factors have been identified in the policy's success. These are:

- a range of measures which have enabled indigenous people to become involved in education decision-making
- sensible government resourcing arrangements, which ensured that education and training authorities would be required to fund educational services to indigenous peoples under mainstream arrangements as for other Australians, while allowing especially earmarked funding for indigenous education to be directed to the further measures identified under the policy as being needed to achieve genuine and lasting equity and appropriate education outcomes

The latter point is in complete contrast to so many other indigenous policy arrangements in Australia where indigenous programs have provided funding which has merely substituted for mainstream funding and efforts.

In the absence of national policy arrangements requiring Australia's departments/institutions in many other areas to properly provide services to indigenous people and communities as for other Australians, those running specialist indigenous programs have often had little choice but to try and meet the gaps. The national indigenous education and training policy shows there is another way.

This report is based on a paper 'Promoting the education and training equality of indigenous peoples in Australia' that was prepared for the Second World Conference of Remedies to Racial and Ethnic Inequality, held in Adelaide in September 1998 (Robinson & Bamblett 1998). We would like to thank the Faculty of Aboriginal and Islander Studies of the University of South Austral and the Ray Wilkins Centre for Human Relations and Social Justice of the University of Minnesota for organising the conference.

Chris Robinson and Lionel Bamblett

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About the authors

Chris Robinson

Chris Robinson is managing director of the National Centre for Vocational Education and Research Ltd (NCVER). He has extensive experience as a researcher and as a senior policy advisor on employment, education and training matters in Australia and the United Kingdom. This included heading the employment, education and training branch of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, providing advice to two Australian prime ministers.

Chris was head of the Aboriginal Education Branch in the Department of Employment, Education and Training when the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy* was developed. He was a - the research director of the secretariat to the Committee of Review of Aboriginal Employment and Training Programs.

Lionel Bamblett

Lionel Bamblett is the general manager of the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated. He has provided advice to successive governments in Victoria about measures to improve education and training opportunities for Koorie people in Victoria, and has played a prominent role in promoting indigenous education and training issues nationally.

Lionel was a member of the National Aboriginal Reference Group which played a key role in the development of the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy*. He was also a member of the 1994 National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

Dedication

THIS VOLUME IS dedicated to the memories of Mick Miller and Peter Reeves, both of whom passed away during 1998. Both were integrally involved in the formulation and development of the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy*.

Mick Miller was one of Australia's first indigenous secondary teachers who rose to the position of deputy principal in the Queensland education system. Mick played an enormously prominent role in indigenous education and training throughout his life, which culminated in the release of the report of the *Committee of Review of Aboriginal Employment of Training Programs* (chaired by Mick Miller) in 1985. Following the review Mick was instrumental in discussions with the Commonwealth Government which led to the decision to develop a national indigenous education and training policy.

Peter Reeves was an assistant secretary in the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs. Peter worked in the Aboriginal Education Branch at the time of the formulation, development and initial implementation of the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy*. Peter's contribution was outstanding, particularly to the development of a range of new student support measures to assist indigenous students in all sectors of education and training.

Executive summary

A DECADE AGO Australia embarked on a concerted effort to eliminate the inequalities between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the rest of the population with respect to access to, participation in and outcomes from all levels of education and training.

All Australian governments (Federal, State and Territory) adopted the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy*, which was developed through a process of extensive consultation with indigenous people, indigenous education groups, educators and governments. The policy included indigenous involvement in education decision-making as a central theme. Other aspects included an innovative legislative base to enshrine equity principles, substantially increased financial resources and the introduction of triennial funding for Commonwealth indigenous education initiatives. The extent to which the policy has contributed to reductions in inequality is examined in this report.

In the decade since the national policy came into effect, there has been an enormous improvement in indigenous access to and participation in all forms of education and training in Australia. Parity between indigenous and non-indigenous people is within sight in some sectors and amongst some age groups—something that looked impossible 15 to 20 years ago, given the poor record Australia had at that time in providing adequate and appropriate education and training opportunities to indigenous people.

The national policy has also facilitated a visible shift in attitudes and actions on the part of indigenous and non-indigenous people alike, to make Australia's schools, technical and further education (TAFE) institutes and universities better accommodate the needs and aspirations of indigenous students. This is perhaps best reflected by the involvement of many thousands of indigenous parents in establishing and participating in some 3600 Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness (ASSPA) program committees across Australia. ASSPA committees are comprised of indigenous people and school principals dedicated to making Australian schools a better learning environment for indigenous students.

More still needs to be done, especially in relation to achieving the policy's goals, which are aimed at parity of educational outcomes between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples.

The most critical issue for future improvements is to make sure the conditions are created to encourage indigenous people to achieve *appropriate outcomes* in education and training. Indigenous aspirations to achieve the skills and qualifications necessary to enable indigenous peoples to take a full role in Australian society need to be met without requiring indigenous people to forsake their communities or cultural heritage.

1 Introduction

ALMOST A DECADE has passed since Australia adopted the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy*, known in those days as the AEP. It is now time to take stock of and to review how the policy came about and, more importantly, what it has achieved.

The AEP was a bold step. It represented an agreement between the national and State/Territory governments of Australia to work together and to attempt to provide the strategies and resources necessary to try to eliminate education and training inequality between indigenous people and other Australians.

What made the policy even more unique is that its educational equality principles were enshrined in legislation, along with another central purpose, that being to increase the involvement of indigenous peoples in the processes of education decision-making, the latter being a very worthwhile objective.

Perhaps what is even more remarkable is that the legislation for the AEP was passed through both houses of the Australian parliament without a single amendment, and with the full support of all political parties. This is a very rare feat indeed and, as far as we know, it has never occurred before or since with respect to legislation covering indigenous matters.

The commencement of the AEP in 1989 represented a widespread commitment at the time to tackle the education and training inequality faced by indigenous people.

There has been strong support for the policy to date amongst Australia's major political parties, and it is critical that this widespread support continues.

In this report we document how the AEP was developed and what has been achieved since its inception.

2 The rationale for the national indigenous education policy

THERE HAD BEEN a long-held concern amongst indigenous people, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, that any real push towards economic, social and political equality would necessarily rest with making very substantial progress towards removing indigenous educational inequality in Australia.

Available evidence confirmed the need for such concerns. For instance, in 1969 there were fewer than 100 indigenous people enrolled in any kind of formal tertiary, higher education or university course anywhere in Australia. Secondary schooling drop-out rates amongst young indigenous people were enormous. The retention rate (i.e. the number who complete secondary schooling, Year 12, as a proportion of the number who enter secondary schooling) of indigenous secondary students in Australia as a whole did not exceed ten per cent until 1983. Even in primary schooling there was considerable evidence of non-enrolment and non-attendance.

Australia's record of providing adequate education and training opportunities for indigenous people was poor until the 1980s.

A more general national awareness about the appalling levels of indigenous education that then existed in Australia really began to unfold with the general increase in awareness about the plight of indigenous Australians during the lead-up to the 1967 referendum. A referendum was passed (a rare thing in Australia) to enable the Australian Constitution to be amended to give the Commonwealth Government powers to enact special measures for indigenous peoples in Australia. In the very late 1960s, and more generally in the 1970s, successive Commonwealth governments began introducing some programs aimed at improving Aboriginal education. These included income support schemes to enable poor indigenous families to keep their children in school or for youth and older people to undertake tertiary studies, a special school excursions program, tutorial assistance, special measures to train indigenous teachers and a host of other measures, most of which were very modest indeed in terms of their resources and scope.

2

From these humble beginnings a wider range of Commonwealth programs began to develop. Income support programs for students and families grew; the

Training for Aboriginals (TAP) was introduced to promote the attainment of work-based skills; and various special purpose grants programs from the Commonwealth to the States/Territories emerged to promote indigenous education and training.

By the mid-to-late 1980s, there were some 16 special Commonwealth education and training programs aimed at indigenous people, that were administered by five different Commonwealth departments or agencies.

States and Territories, who have the primary responsibility for the provision of education and training to all Australians, including indigenous peoples, began to implement some special measures to promote Aboriginal education particularly during the 1970s and 1980s. Prominent amongst these were special schools in remote areas and the employment of Aboriginal education workers, a group of para-professional indigenous teacher aids to work alongside non-Aboriginal teachers in schools with significant Aboriginal student populations.

In the higher education sector in the early 1980s the Commonwealth began earmarking funding to universities and colleges of advanced education to provide places for indigenous students.

These very disparate and ad hoc measures produced some improvements in indigenous participation in education in Australia. Yet, as shown in table 1, by the mid 1980s Aboriginal secondary enrolment rates had just reached a notionally equitable rate with the rest of the population, as indigenous secondary students were 1.5 per cent of all secondary students in that year. This is significant because in 1986 indigenous people made up 1.5 per cent of Australia's total population. The indigenous retention rate in secondary education remained a major problem, having only reached 13 per cent by 1984.

The figures in table 1 also show that indigenous people were still massively under-represented in the technical and further education (TAFE) and higher education sectors in the mid-1980s.

Table 1 Indicators of the education and training inequality of indigenous people

Sector	Year	No. of indigenous students ('000)	Total no.of students ('000)	Indigenous students as a proportion of total students (%)
Secondary schooling	1986	20.0	1301.0	1.5
TAFE	1986	3.3	950.0[a]	0.3
Higher education	1983	0.8	348.6	0.2

Source: Derived from MCEETYA 1993, Aboriginal Education Policy Task Force 1988a; DEETYA 1998a; and NCVER 1998a

As the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI 1988) notes, there were a number of inquiries during the 1980s that identified the extent

to which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were educationally disadvantaged compared to the rest of the community.

The two really key reports which were released during the 1980s and which had a lot to do with changing government attitudes towards indigenous education and training in Australia were:

- the 1985 report of the Committee of Review of Aboriginal Employment and Training Programs (chaired by Mick Miller)
- the 1988 report of the Aboriginal Education Policy Task Force (chaired by Paul Hughes)

The Miller report documented the level of indigenous disadvantage and proposed changes to various Aboriginal education and training measures. Miller made the important connection between indigenous education levels and employment outcomes. The review concluded that:

> *low school completion rates have considerably exacerbated Aboriginal employment difficulties, and have resulted in a relatively low number of Aboriginal people being able to go on to tertiary and further education. Our view is that even with considerable improvements in the arrangements for Aboriginal post-school education and vocational training, that system will never be able to overcome the deficiencies that are currently being left by the school system. The committee, therefore, believes that improved access to employment and a fulfilling of the potential for development in Aboriginal communities will not only rely on reforms to post-secondary education and training arrangements, but also on the ability of schools to cater better for the needs of Aboriginal students.*
>
> (Committee of Review of Aboriginal Employment and Training Programs 1985, p.197)

Even more important was that the Miller review provided concrete evidence, for the first time, that improved education and training levels could actually overcome the barriers of racial discrimination, geographic isolation and cultural alienation and produce equitable employment outcomes between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. The review reported statistical evidence for 1981 (p.84) to show that:

- Aboriginal people with tertiary (i.e. higher education or TAFE) qualifications were twice as likely to be employed than Aboriginal people without any post-school qualifications
- amongst those with bachelor or higher degree qualifications, diploma and trade certificate qualifications (from higher education or TAFE) employment rates differed little between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians
- indigenous people had much lower rates of employment that non-indigenous people if they had no qualifications or even if they had other certificate level qualifications from TAFE

Following these revelations the government established an Aboriginal Education Policy Task Force (chaired by Paul Hughes) to more fully examine indigenous education and make recommendations about the way forward.

The task force reported in 1988 documenting the full extent of the level of education and training inequality faced by indigenous Australians. It stated:

> *Australians take it for granted, as an inalienable right of citizenship of this country, that their children will receive at least 10 years of education, as well as the benefits of early childhood education. However, these fundamental rights have not been extended to all Aboriginal families. This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that in the compulsory school years, 1 in 8 Aboriginal children aged 5 to 9 years do not go to school or pre-school, and for those aged 10 to 15 years an appalling 1 in 6 do not have access to appropriate schooling. Moreover, access to and participation in education for Aborigines beyond the age of 15, whether in senior secondary school, technical and further education or higher education, remains at unacceptably low levels—generally at rates some 3 to 5 times lower than for the community as a whole.*
>
> (Aboriginal Education Policy Task Force 1988, p.1)

The task force went on to say:

> *The task force finds this situation totally unacceptable. It is an anathema, as we approach the final decade of the twentieth century, that a developed country like Australia has not managed to extend human rights that are as fundamental as the provision of a basic education to all children and young people in the nation.*
>
> *Aboriginal society has existed in Australia for over 40 000 years and provided for its members a unique social and educational system of learning. In contrast, during the last 200 years of colonisation, successive governments and their educational systems, with a quite clearly established sense of purpose and goodwill, have failed to provide the environment and the resources to allow Aboriginal Australians to attain a level of education of their choice, whilst maintaining their unique cultures and traditions. The task force considers it imperative, therefore, that all Australians join with the government in a national commitment to eliminate these injustices. Nothing is more fundamental than the right of all Aboriginal children to appropriate basic education, and the right of Aboriginal people to expect equity in education beyond the compulsory years of schooling.*
>
> *The difficulties faced by Aboriginal people in attempting to gain an education are not confined to low rates of participation. Aboriginal students frequently face discrimination and alienation within schools and other educational institutions, and education is often not delivered in a way which fully meets the needs of Aboriginal people. Racism is a key factor in the alienation of Aboriginal people experienced within the various education institutions. Because of these and other adverse circumstances, the outcomes for Aboriginal people are substantially lower than for other Australian students.*
>
> *The task force believes that equality for Aborigines in education is essential to the economic, social and cultural development of Aboriginal communities.*
>
> (Aboriginal Education Policy Task Force 1988, pp.1–2)

The task force called for the development of a national policy 'to achieve broad equity between Aboriginal people and other Australians in access, participation and outcomes in all forms of education and training by the turn of the century'.

Thus the rationale for developing a national indigenous education and training policy stemmed from the following:

- first, a clear documentation of the extent to which education and training inequality existed amongst indigenous and non-indigenous Australians, making indigenous people the most educationally disadvantaged group in Australia
- second, a growing realisation that the economic and employment inequality faced by indigenous people could never be overcome without achieving equality in education and training between indigenous peoples and other Australians
- third, there was a broad level of agreement amongst all political parties and across the Australian community, amongst indigenous and non-indigenous people alike, that addressing indigenous educational inequality was both necessary and the 'right thing to do'. This level of agreement did not exist about other much more controversial indigenous issues such as land rights, compensation, anti-discrimination and racial vilification measures, etc.

3 The key elements of the national indigenous education policy

FOLLOWING THE COMMONWEALTH Government's consideration of both the Miller report and the Aboriginal Education Policy Task Force report, a process was established to develop a national Aboriginal education and training policy.

In October 1988, the Commonwealth Minister for Employment, Education and Training (the Hon. John Dawkins) announced that a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education policy would be developed.

The policy was developed during the following year, and launched in October 1989.

Some of the key elements of this policy are described below.

3.1 An inclusive policy development process

First and foremost was the decision to develop a national rather than a Commonwealth policy.

The Commonwealth minister, in announcing the development of the AEP, declared that all State and Territory governments had indicated their willingness to be involved in development of the national indigenous education policy.

Just as crucial was the decision to have the substantial involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the policy development process.

An Aboriginal reference group was established (chaired by Lynette Crocker) comprising representatives of each State/Territory Aboriginal education consultative group to ensure indigenous input to the policy development process.

Most important of all were the widespread consultations with indigenous people in all States and Territories around Australia, including in the Torres Straits. This process included hundreds of indigenous people who were not members of the education and training industry, but were concerned members of indigenous communities.

Discussions were also undertaken at senior officials level between Commonwealth and State/Territory education and training authorities, non-government providers and individual education and training institutions.

3.2 Agreed national objectives

The policy development process embarked upon yielded both a comprehensive and agreed set of objectives for the national policy.

The four key objectives of the policy are achieving:

- the involvement of Aboriginal people in education decision-making
- equality of access to educational services
- equity in educational participation
- equitable and appropriate education outcomes

Underpinning the four key objectives were 21 different goals for the policy as shown in the following box. These goals covered objectives in the pre-school, primary school, secondary school, vocational education and training (VET) and higher education sectors in Australia.

The goals of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy

Involvement of Aboriginal people in educational decision-making:

Goal 1 Establish effective arrangements for the participation of Aboriginal parents and community members in decisions regarding the planning, delivery and evaluation of pre-school, primary and secondary education services for their children.

Goal 2 Increase the number of Aboriginal people employed as educational administrators, teachers, curriculum advisors, teachers assistants, home-school liaison officers and other education workers, including community people engaged in teaching Aboriginal culture, history, contemporary society and Aboriginal languages.

Goal 3 Establish effective arrangements for the participation of Aboriginal students and community members in decisions regarding the planning, delivery and evaluation of post-school education services, including technical and further education colleges and higher education institutions.

Goal 4 Increase the number of Aboriginal people employed as administrators, teachers, researchers and student services officers in technical and further education colleges and higher education institutions.

Goal 5 Provide education and training services to develop the skills of Aboriginal people to participate in educational decision-making.

Goal 6 Develop arrangements for the provision of independent advice for Aboriginal communities regarding educational decisions at regional, State, Territory and national levels.

Equality of access to educational services

Goal 7 Ensure that Aboriginal children of pre-primary school age have access to pre-school services on a basis comparable to other Australian children of the same age.

Goal 8 Ensure that all Aboriginal children have local access to primary and compulsory secondary schooling.

Goal 9 Ensure equitable access for Aboriginal people to post-compulsory secondary schooling, to technical and further education, and higher education.

Equity of educational participation

Goal 10 Achieve the full participation of Aboriginal children in pre-school education for a period similar to that for all Australian children.

Goal 11 Achieve the participation of Aboriginal children in compulsory schooling.

Goal 12 Achieve the participation of Aboriginal people in post-compulsory secondary education, in technical and further education and in higher education, at rates commensurate with those of all Australians in those sectors.

Equitable and appropriate educational outcomes

Goal 13 Provide adequate preparation of Aboriginal children through pre-school education for the schooling years ahead.

Goal 14 Enable Aboriginal attainment of skills to the same standard as other Australian students throughout the compulsory schooling years.

Goal 15 Enable Aboriginal students to attain the successful completion of Year 12 or equivalent at the same rates as for other Australian students.

Goal 16 Enable Aboriginal students to attain the same graduation rates from award courses in technical and further education and in higher education, as for other Australians.

Goal 17 Develop programs to support the maintenance and continued use of Aboriginal languages.

Goal 18 Provide community education services, which enable Aboriginal people to develop the skills to manage the development of their communities.

Goal 19 Enable the attainment of proficiency in English language and numeracy competencies by Aboriginal adults with limited or no educational experience.

Goal 20 Enable Aboriginal students at all levels of education to have an appreciation of their history, cultures and identity.

Goal 21 Provide all Australian students with an understanding of and respect of Aboriginal traditional and contemporary cultures.

Source: Commonwealth of Australia, 1989a

A critical element of the national policy was the agreement for the involvement of indigenous people in educational decision-making. This was thought to be essential given the importance the Aboriginal Education Task Force had placed on *appropriate* education in its recommendation to government.

> *The task force believes that a new approach to Aboriginal education can only succeed if the Aboriginal community is fully involved in determining the policies and programs that are intended to provide appropriate education for their community*
>
> (Aboriginal Education Task Force 1998, p.1)

These principles and goals were agreed to by the Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers, along with the Ministers for Education and Training in the Commonwealth and States and Territories.

These principles were also endorsed by the National Aboriginal Reference Group and the Aboriginal education consultative group in each State and Territory.

A joint policy statement was then issued reflecting the head of agreement between the Commonwealth and all the States and Territories. The Prime Minister released this statement—*National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy: Joint Policy Statement*—in October 1989.

3.3 Legislation to enshrine the policy's goals

The Commonwealth Government then took the unusual step, using its constitutional powers to make laws for the benefit of indigenous people, to enshrine the objectives and 21 goals of the AEP in legislation.

The Act—*Aboriginal Education (Supplementary Assistance) Act 1989*—passed through both houses of Federal Parliament in late 1989, without amendment and with the full support of all political parties. The original Act is represented in the appendix.

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The Act remains in force to this day having been subject to minor amendments and/or re-appropriations of funds in 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996 and 1998. The title of the Act was changed in 1995 from 'Aboriginal Education' to 'Indigenous Education'. The current Act is called *Indigenous Education (Supplementary Assistance) Act 1998*.

3.4 Enhanced resources for indigenous education

The financial arrangements made under the AEP were that:

- primary and secondary school places for indigenous students would be provided for under the general financial arrangements between the Commonwealth and States/Territories for the provision of schooling places for all Australian children

- similarly general Commonwealth/State arrangements for the provision of TAFE places would apply to TAFE places for indigenous students
- in universities earmarked funding for indigenous students would occur under general higher education funding from the Commonwealth
- the AEP would contribute supplementary assistance to help pay for the provision of additional measures, necessary to make progress towards achieving the objectives of the policy

The Commonwealth merged its previous 16 different Aboriginal education programs into the AEP arrangements. Two main generic measures were supported under the Act. These were:

- strategic initiatives whereby the payments could be made to education and training institutions in the States and Territories, for strategic initiatives that were designed to help achieve the objectives of the policy
- supplementary support for students such as for additional tutorial assistance

The Commonwealth greatly expanded its resourcing of Aboriginal education by some 40 per cent over previous funding levels with the introduction of the legislation to appropriate nearly $270 million for the first triennium of the policy, which was the 1990 to 1992 triennium.

Another feature of the legislation is that it appropriated Commonwealth supplementary funding for indigenous education and training on a triennial basis (noting that only this, defence spending and higher education funding is appropriated on other than an annual basis by the Commonwealth).

4 The impact of the national indigenous education policy

4.1 Increasing indigenous involvement in education decision-making

THE KEY ELEMENTS of this objective were:

- the establishment of arrangements in pre-schools, schools, vocational education and training institutions and universities to enable effective indigenous involvement in decision-making at the local institutional level
- appropriate arrangements for involvement of indigenous people at the national and State/Territory level
- increases in the numbers of indigenous people employed in various capacities across all education and training sectors

The centrepiece of these strategies was the establishment of the Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness (ASSPA) program which was aimed at getting indigenous parents and secondary students involved in school decision-making processes through the creation of ASSPA-supported school committees all around Australia. ASSPA committees are comprised of school principals and indigenous people in all schools with a certain number of indigenous students. ASSPA committees servicing a cluster of schools were also established in situations where there was only a small number of indigenous students in each school.

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Evidence to the 1994 National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, chaired by Mandaway Yunupingu (undertaken five years after the AEP began), suggests very strong community support of ASSPA committees. There is a lot of ad hoc evidence to suggest that schools have become much more accommodating of indigenous views and requirements as a result of the work of ASSPA committees. Indeed, some 3600 ASSPA committees have now been established in Australian schools under the policy, covering nearly 100 000 indigenous students. Total ASSPA funding is now around $18.5 million and each committee has some three to 12 indigenous members. The review also outlined some concerns about the workings of some ASSPA committees, particularly cases where school principals were thought to be dominating the committee.

The same review also noted that many tertiary education and training institutions have set up indigenous student support units and other mechanisms which have some involvement in institutional decision-making. However, there is a lack of any systematic evidence as how integral these arrangements are in decision-making processes across the VET and higher education sectors.

Hard evidence is also patchy on the employment of indigenous people as teachers and trainers, and in other capacities across the schools, VET and higher education sectors.

By 1991, only 0.5 per cent of all teachers in Australian schools were indigenous people, well below the proportion of indigenous people in the total population. Moreover, in 1991 only 1.3 per cent of people employed in schools in non-teacher positions such as teacher aids and administrative and support staff were indigenous people. Again a figure below the indigenous proportion of the total population. National data on VET staffing is not collected. While there have been some increases in indigenous employment in education and training institutions, the evidence remains patchy as to its extent.

Turning to arrangements at the State/Territory and national levels for the involvement of indigenous people in decision-making, Australia has a well developed network of Aboriginal education consultative groups (AECGs) in each State and Territory. AECGs have the role of providing advice to the State or Territory ministers for education. In some States/Territories a local network of AECGs has also evolved to gain input from local communities to educational decision-making processes.

In recent years arrangements for the systematic provision of advice at the national level have been more spasmodic.

4.2 Equitable access to and participation in education and training

Some crude overall education and training equity benchmarks are shown in table 2.

They show that, in aggregate terms, there has been an enormous change in indigenous access to and participation across all sectors of public education and training since the AEP began.

In 1996 some 1.9 per cent of Australia's population were indigenous. As shown in table 2, indigenous people now comprise:

- 3.5% of all primary school students
- 2.1% of all secondary school students
- 2.5% of all VET participants
- 1.1% of all university students

In all sectors except the university sector, indigenous participation rates now exceed the proportion of indigenous people in the Australian population.

However, these figures do not yet represent the complete elimination of inequities in indigenous participation in Australia. This is because:

- indigenous people have a proportionately higher level of people in the younger age groups compared with the rest of the population
- opportunities for indigenous people are still restricted in some rural and remote regions beyond the provision of primary schooling
- participation rates do not necessarily reflect non-attendance problems

The figures do, however, point to very considerable progress having been made since the commencement of the policy. The figures in table 2 are a great contrast to those shown earlier in this report, in table 1, before the national policy commenced.

Table 2 Crude education and training equity benchmarks

Sector	Year	No. of indigenous students ('000)	Total no. of students ('000)	Indigenous students as a proportion of total students (%)
Schooling				
Primary	**1996**	**64.9**	**1848.2**	**3.5**
Secondary	**1996**	**27.8**	**1294.8**	**2.1**
Total	**1996**	**92.7**	**3143.0**	**2.9**
Vocational education and training	1997	35.8	1458.6	2.5
Universities	**1997**	**7.5**	**658.8**	**1.1**

Source: MCEETYA 1996; NCVER 1998a; and DEETYA 1998b

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A more detailed picture is given if we consider the age participation rates of indigenous people and all Australians in each education and training sector.

School participation rates (including pre-school) are shown in table 3. There have been improvements in the school participation of young indigenous people, with the gap between indigenous and all Australian school participation rates of five to 15 year olds halving since the beginning of the national policy.

A massive change has occurred in the secondary school participation rates of indigenous teenagers since 1986, as shown in table 4. The school participation rate of 16 to 17-year-old indigenous people has increased by 40 per cent in the past decade, and the school participation rate for 18 to 20-year-old indigenous people has more than doubled. Nevertheless, they remain significantly lower than for other Australian people aged 16 to 20 years.

Table 3 School[a] participation rates, 5 to 15 year olds, 1986 and 1996

Age group	Indigenous people (%)		All Australians (%)	
	1986	*1996*	*1986*	*1996*
5–9 years[a]	88.2	85.6	99.0[b]	92.0
10–15 years[a]	83.1	85.2	98.3	92.9

Note: a Includes pre-school, primary and secondary schooling, where appropriate
b Estimated

Source: ABS, 1996 and 1986 Census of Population and Housing

Table 4 School participation rates, 16 to 24 year olds, 1986 and 1996

Age group	Indigenous people (%)		All Australians (%)	
	1986	*1996*	*1986*	*1996*
16–17 years	26.3	36.8	53.4	67.2
18–20 years	1.5	3.7	3.0	6.3
21–24 years	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.3

Source: ABS, 1996 and 1986 Census of Population and Housing

The patterns of VET participation show a substantial increase in the involvement of indigenous people in TAFE courses and other VET programs since the AEP commenced, as shown in table 5. This increase has occurred across all age groups.

Indigenous VET participation rates are comparable with non-indigenous VET participation rates in the 21 to 24 year age group and are actually much higher for indigenous people than for other Australians in the 16 to 17-year-old and 25 years and over cohorts. It is only amongst 18 to 20 year olds that the non-indigenous VET participation rate greatly exceeds the VET indigenous participation rate.

Table 5 VET/TAFE participation rates, 1986 and 1996

Age group	Indigenous people (%)		All Australians (%)	
	1986[a]	*1996[b]*	*1986[a]*	*1996[b]*
16–17 years	4.8	23.4	19.4	19.9
18–20 years	4.0	22.5	22.7	27.5
21–24 years	2.6	17.1	11.8	16.4
25 years and over	1.6	12.6	5.7*	8.2*

Note: * For the age group 25–64 years only

Source: a ABS, 1986 Census of Population and Housing
b National VET provider data collection managed by NCVER

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Very substantial increases have also occurred in the participation rates of indigenous people in higher education across all age groups. This is shown in table 6. For instance, the indigenous higher education participation rate rose by:

- 160% for 18 to 20 year olds since 1986
- 170% for 21 to 24 year olds since 1986
- some 250% for those aged 25 years and over since 1996

Table 6 Higher education participation rates, 1986 and 1996

Age group	Indigenous people (%)		All Australians (%)	
	1986	*1996*	*1986*	*1996*
16–17 years	0.5	0.6	1.7	1.7
18–20 years	2.0	5.2	15.7	24.2
21–24 years	1.4	3.9	8.3	14.4
25 years and over	1.0	2.5	2.0[a]	3.1[a]

Note: a For the age group 25–64 years only

Source: ABS, 1996 and 1986 Census of Population and Housing

Nevertheless, the rates still remain below those of non-Aboriginal people of the same age.

This is necessarily a brief snapshot. More information is given in the National Review of Education for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (1994a, 1994b) and by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS 1996a). For those interested the regional perspective VAEAI (1998) provides an interesting analysis of some very significant improvements in regional areas of Victoria.

4.3 Improvements in education and training outcomes

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The fourth main objective of the national policy relates to achieving equitable outcomes between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians across all sectors of education and training.

An indication of the completion rates of indigenous school students is given in table 7. Whether we look at completion rates to Year 10, Year 11 or Year 12, there has been a substantial improvement in indigenous retention rates over the life of the national policy. For instance, the indigenous secondary schooling retention rate to:

- Year 10 has increased by over 10% since 1989 so that now some three quarters of indigenous secondary students complete Year 10
- Year 11 has risen by over 50% since 1989, so that now nearly half of all indigenous secondary students stay on to complete Year 11

- Year 12 has risen by over 140% since 1989, albeit from a very low base, so now some 30% of all indigenous secondary students go on to complete Year 12

Despite these very major improvements in the secondary schooling outcomes of indigenous students, the figures also show that considerable gaps still exist between indigenous and non-indigenous students, particularly in retention rates to Year 12.

Table 7 Apparent secondary student schooling retention rates to Years 10, 11 and 12

	Secondary school retention rates %		
	Year 10	*Year 11*	*Year 12*
Indigenous students			
1989	68.5	30.8	12.3
1991	75.7	39.7	20.7
1993	75.6	48.8	24.7
1996	75.8	47.2	29.2
Non-indigenous students			
1996	97.3	84.3	74.2

Source: MCEETYA 1996; National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People 1994b

In the VET sector, the best current indication of outcomes is given by looking at the outcomes achieved from each module enrolment. Courses provided by TAFE and other VET providers are broken down into modules (i.e. similar to subjects). Unfortunately we do not have reliable VET outcomes data for the late 1980s to be able to examine changes since the national policy commenced.

From table 8 we can see that around half of all indigenous enrolments in VET modules are assessed and lead to a successful outcome. In contrast the corresponding success rates for non-indigenous enrolments are that just over 60 per cent are assessed and lead to a successful outcome.

The really interesting issue from the data in table 8 is that indigenous failure rates are not significantly higher than non-indigenous failure rates, all being in the four to six per cent range.

The key differences between indigenous and non-indigenous patterns of module enrolment are really that:

- much higher proportions of indigenous students are continuing study from one year to the next, and thus have not yet been assessed
- indigenous withdrawal rates are higher

Finally the figures on higher education award course completions, shown in table 9, indicate that amongst indigenous students the number of award completions has trebled since 1988 to nearly 1000. This means that by 1996 some

12.7 per cent of indigenous higher education students satisfactorily completed all the requirements to receive an award. This completion rate has not increased much since 1989 because the number of students enrolled in universities has also grown very strongly.

The other point to note is that the award completion rate for non-indigenous students (of 22.1 per cent in 1996) was almost double that for indigenous students.

Table 8 Module outcomes[a] from vocational education and training 1996

Outcome	Enrolments (%)			
	Indigenous males	*Indigenous females*	*Non-indigenous males*	*Non-indigenous females*
Assessed and successful				
Passed	48.0	44.5	63.2	62.4
Gained recognition of prior learning	0.6	0.7	1.8	1.9
Gained credit for study done elsewhere	1.2	1.4	2.8	2.7
Total successful	*49.8*	*46.6*	*67.8*	*67.0*
Assessed and unsuccessful				
Failed	4.9	5.7	4.1	5.8
Total unsuccessful	*4.9*	*5.7*	*4.1*	*5.8*
Other outcomes				
Completed hours but not assessed	6.5	6.9	6.3	5.9
Withdrew	16.4	14.1	10.9	9.4
Assessed and result withheld	4.7	5.6	1.8	1.9
Continuing study as module not yet completed	12.7	14.5	4.4	5.8
Outcome not reported	5.0	6.6	4.7	4.2
Total other	*45.3*	*47.7*	*28.1*	*27.2*
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Note: a Outcomes expressed as a percentage of total module enrolments

Source: NCVER 1998b

Table 9 Higher education award course completions[a]

Year	No. of award course completions ('000)	No. of higher education students ('000)	Ratio of award completions to higher education students (%)
Indigenous students			
1988	0.31	3.0	10.3
1991	0.61	4.8	12.6
1993	0.65	5.6	11.6
1996	0.95	7.5	12.7
All students			
1996	145.30	658.8	22.1

Note: a Completed the academic requirements of an award course in a university

Source: National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples 1994b; DEETYA 1998b

5 Conclusions

THERE HAVE BEEN very substantial improvements in indigenous education and training in Australia since the 1970s and early 1980s.

From a situation of very low rates of indigenous participation and involvement in education and training, beyond the basic education levels of primary and junior secondary schooling only two to three decades ago, we now have a situation where greatly increased proportions of indigenous peoples of all ages are undertaking the full array of education and training options across Australia.

In some sectors, and amongst some age groups, indigenous participation rates are now comparable with or have exceeded non-indigenous education and training participation rates.

The patterns of increasing indigenous take-up of education and training have greatly accelerated since the late 1980s when Australia introduced the *National Aboriginal and Islander Education Policy*. Arrangements under the national policy have very clearly contributed to acceleration in the process of reducing educational training inequality between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.

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Although the evidence is less clear-cut, there appears to have been a lot of progress in terms of indigenous involvement in schools and other education and training institutions. For instance, many, many thousands of indigenous parents have become actively involved in the 3600 ASSPA parent-school committees that have been established all around Australia. The indigenous community has made an enormous attempt to make sure Australian schools cater better for the indigenous students in all sorts of ways. Moreover, many non-indigenous staff have worked hard to improve the school environment for indigenous people.

Some similar changes are also occurring in TAFE institutes and universities with the establishment of indigenous advisory committees, indigenous faculties, indigenous courses and indigenous student support units.

The extent to which these developments have fundamentally changed education decision-making with schools and other education and training institutions across the board still remains an unknown. There is still a long way to

go with respect to employment of indigenous people across all realms of the 'education and training industry'.

What we do know is that vastly very many more indigenous people are enrolling, are staying on longer, and are satisfactorily completing education and training programs than ever before.

Australia's national indigenous education policy demonstrates what can be achieved if there is a genuine and concerted attempt on the part of all governments and amongst schools, universities, TAFEs and other education and training providers to tackle inequality. Most important of all, it reflects the desire and actions of indigenous people to participate and become involved in all types of education and training.

Another key element in the policy's success was the agreement between the Commonwealth and State and Territory governments that general arrangements for the provision of education and training places that applied to other Australians would and must apply to indigenous people as well. This meant that education and training authorities and institutions right around Australia had a clear obligation to provide appropriate education and training places to indigenous people in those situations where it had not been occurring at the time. It also freed up other resources earmarked especially for Aboriginal education and training to be used for supplementary and additional support measures necessary to achieve equality in the long term.

This approach avoided problems so evident in some other areas of indigenous policy and administration, where resources earmarked especially to tackle inequality and provide supplementary assistance merely substituted for resources for mainstream service provision that were supposed to cover all Australians.

This is not to say that everything has worked, nor that there are still many things that need to be done to truly eliminate educational inequality in Australia.

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The National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People conducted in 1994 (five years after the national policy commenced) identified some issues that still need to be addressed.

The aggregate statistics presented in this report mask some of the real dynamics and subtleties determining the extent to which different indigenous peoples are having their educational aspirations met by Australia's education and training systems. The verdict is still out on some of these issues.

Following the 1994 review of the national policy, the Ministerial Task Force for the Education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples of MCEETYA (chaired by Paul Hughes) examined the findings of the 1994 national review. It proposed *A national strategy for the Education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples 1996–2000* (MCEETYA 1995).

The strategy focussed on continuing the core principles of the original AEP, with some changes in emphasis and balance based on an assessment of progress to date.

There can be no doubt, however, that the national indigenous education policy has contributed to:

- substantial progress towards achieving parity in access to and participation in education and training between indigenous people and other Australians, although more still needs to be done
- the better accommodation of indigenous people's aspirations and cultural needs within many of Australia's schools, TAFE institutions and universities, again noting that much more still needs to be done

It is Goals 13 to 21 of the national policy on equitable and *appropriate outcomes* that still needs the most attention as we move into the 21st Century. Overall indigenous outcomes from education and training have improved markedly in the past decade, but a large gap still exists.

Most important of all is the need to focus on *appropriate outcomes*. Particular care will be needed to make sure that indigenous peoples can gain the qualifications, knowledge and skills necessary to maximise potential and play a full role in the life of indigenous communities and the wider society. This must be done without compromising indigenous people's cultural beliefs. It is not just outcomes we are talking about, it is appropriate outcomes.

A lot has been achieved but there is still a lot to be done.

The question of whether the removal of educational inequality can lead to the elimination of economic inequality will necessarily be a long-term issue. To date the growth of indigenous employment rates has really only been sufficient to keep up with the growth in size of the indigenous working age population (see ABS 1996a, 1996b). The full impact in the improvements in indigenous education and training is yet to be fully felt in the labour market.

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These developments have clearly not yet been sufficient to remove racism in our community. For instance, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission felt it necessary to release a document earlier this year (ATSIC 1998) to try and combat some misconceptions about indigenous Australians, in response to some visible signs of racism in our community. However, we take the view that measures to remove inequality between all people in Australia will be a necessary, but not sufficient, pre-requisite to the reduction of racism in our communities.

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Appendix

Aboriginal Education (Supplementary Assistance) Act 1989

No. 1 of 1990

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SCHEDULES

10640/90 Cat. No. 90 4016 3

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Aboriginal Education (Supplementary Assistance) Act 1989

No. 1 of 1990

An Act to provide supplementary financial assistance to advance the education of Aboriginals, and for related purposes

[*Assented to 17 January 1990*]

BE IT ENACTED by the Queen, and the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Australia, as follows:

PART 1—PRELIMINARY

Short title

1. This Act may be cited as the *Aboriginal Education (Supplementary Assistance) Act 1989*.

Commencement

2. This Act shall come into operation on the day on which it receives the Royal Assent.

Interpretation

3. In this Act, unless the contrary intention appears:

"Aboriginal" means a member of the Aboriginal race of Australia, and includes a descendant of the indigenous inhabitants of the Torres Strait Islands;

"agreement" means an Aboriginal education agreement made under section 8.

Object of Act—increasing Aboriginal involvement in educational decisions

4. It is an object of this Act to increase the involvement of Aboriginal people in the making of decisions concerning education by:

(a) the establishment of effective arrangements for the participation of Aboriginal parents and other Aboriginal people in decisions concerning the planning, delivery and evaluation of preschool, primary and secondary education for Aboriginal children; and

(b) the establishment of effective arrangements for the participation of Aboriginal students and other Aboriginal people in decisions concerning the planning, delivery and evaluation of post school education to Aboriginal people; and

(c) an increase in the number of Aboriginal people who are employed or otherwise involved in education;

(i) as administrators, teachers, teaching assistants, researchers, student services officers, curriculum advisers and community liaison officers; and

(ii) as special teachers of Aboriginal culture, history, contemporary society and languages;

or otherwise; and

(d) the provision of education and training to develop the skills of Aboriginal people that are relevant to their participation in the making of decisions concerning education; and

(e) the development of arrangements to secure independent advice from Aboriginal communities concerning educational decisions to be taken at local, regional, State and Territory, and national levels.

Object of Act—equal access to education by Aboriginals

5. It is an object of this Act to ensure that Aboriginal people enjoy equality with other Australians in their access to education and, in particular, to ensure:

(a) that Aboriginal children who are below primary school age enjoy equality with other Australian children of that age in their access to preschool education; and

(b) that all Aboriginal children have local access to compulsory primary and secondary schooling; and

(c) that Aboriginal people have equitable access to other secondary and post secondary education.

Object of Act—equity of participation by Aboriginals in education

6. *It is an object of this Act to ensure equity of participation by* Aboriginal people in education and, in particular, to ensure:

(a) the participation of Aboriginal children in preschool education for a period similar to that during which other Australian children participate in that education; and

(b) that all Aboriginal children participate in compulsory primary and secondary schooling; and

(c) that the rate of participation of Aboriginal people in other secondary and post secondary education is equivalent to that of other Australians.

Object of Act—equitable and appropriate educational outcomes for Aboriginals

7. It is an object of this Act to achieve equitable and appropriate educational outcomes for Aboriginal people by:

(a) arrangements for the adequate preparation of Aboriginal children for primary and later schooling through preschool education; and

(b) arrangements enabling Aboriginal children to attain, through compulsory primary and secondary education, commensurate skills and standards of skills as those attained by other Australian children; and

(c) arrangements enabling Aboriginal secondary students to attain the same rate of successful completion of Year 12, or its equivalents, as that attained by other Australian secondary students; and

(d) arrangements enabling Aboriginal students participating in post secondary education to attain the same graduation rates as those attained by other students so participating; and

(e) developing programs to support the maintenance and continued use of Aboriginal languages; and

(f) the provision of community education services to enable Aboriginal people to manage the development of their communities; and

(g) arrangements for education that will enable Aboriginal adults with limited or no educational experience to attain proficiency in numeracy, the English language and life skills; and

(h) education enabling Aboriginal students to appreciate Aboriginal history and culture and Aboriginal identity; and

(j) education enabling all Australian students to understand and appreciate traditional and contemporary Aboriginal culture.

PART 2—ABORIGINAL EDUCATION AGREEMENTS

Aboriginal education agreements

8. The Minister may, on behalf of the Commonwealth, make an agreement, to be known as an Aboriginal education agreement, providing for the payment of money to the other party to the agreement, or to another person or body, for the purpose of advancing an object of this Act.

Persons who may be parties to agreements

9. Without limiting the generality of section 8, an agreement may be made with:

(a) a State, the Australian Capital Territory or the Northern Territory; or

(b) a university or other institution providing post secondary education; or

(c) a person or body conducting, or associated with, an educational system or educational institution; or

(d) a person qualified to carry out research, or give advice, about education.

Conditions of payments under agreements

10. (1) A payment under an agreement is to be subject to specified conditions providing for:

(a) the acquittal of the amount paid; and

(b) where the payment is for a program of education—the monitoring and evaluation of, or reports on, the program.

(2) A payment may be subject to:

(a) a condition that a report on the result of the payment is given to the Minister; or

(b) a condition that:

(i) where the payment relates to a particular educational institution—information about the number of Aboriginals at the institution; or

(ii) information about the number of Aboriginals likely to benefit from the payment; or

(iii) other relevant information;

is given to the Minister; or

(c) where the payment is to a person controlling employment in an educational system or institution—a condition for the employment of Aboriginals within the system or institution on the same terms and conditions as equivalent staff who are not Aboriginals; or

(d) other specified conditions.

PART 3—FUNDS FOR ASSISTANCE

Appropriations in other Acts

11. (1) The following amounts, amounting to $44,477,313, are to be taken to be appropriated for the purpose of making payments under agreements in the year 1990:

(a) so much out of an amount appropriated under an item of a subdivision of a Division in Schedule 3 to the *Appropriation Act (No. 1) 1989-90* specified in Schedule 1 to this Act as is set out in relation to that item in Schedule 1 to this Act;

(b) so much out of an amount appropriated under an item of a subdivision of a Division in Schedule 4 to the *Appropriation Act (No. 2) 1989-90* specified in Schedule 2 to this Act as is set out in relation to that item in Schedule 2 to this Act;

(c) the amount of $16,651,000 out of the amount appropriated by section 31 of the *States Grants (Schools Assistance) Act 1988* as in force after the commencement of the *States Grants (Schools Assistance) Amendment Act (No. 2) 1989*.

(2) If the amount set out in a Schedule in relation to an item exceeds so much of the amount appropriated under the item as remains unexpended on the commencement of this Act, the amount set out is reduced by the amount of the excess.

Appropriation for 1990-1992

12. (1) For the purpose of making payments under agreements during the 3 calendar years commencing on 1 January 1990, the Consolidated Revenue Fund is:

(a) appropriated during the year 1990 in the amount of $32,032,986; and

(b) appropriated during the year 1991 in the sum of $79,364,082 and the 1990 percentage of $79,364,082; and

(c) appropriated during the year 1992 in the sum of:

(i) $80,385,600; and

(ii) the 1990 percentage of $80,385,600; and

(iii) the 1991 percentage of $80,385,600.

(2) In this section:

"1990 percentage" means the percentage that, in accordance with section 13, is the deflator percentage for the year 1990;

"1991 percentage" means the percentage that, in accordance with section 13, is the deflator percentage for the year 1991.

Deflator percentages

13. (1) In this section:

"deflator" means the implicit price deflator Gross Non-farm Product;

"publish" means publish in the Australian National Accounts.

(2) For the purposes of section 12, the deflator percentage for a year is the annual percentage change in the deflator to the June quarter in that year published by the Australian Statistician.

(3) Any negative annual percentage change in the deflator to the June quarter in a year published by the Australian Statistician is to be taken to be nil per cent.

(4) Subject to subsection (5), if at any time, whether before or after the commencement of this section, the Australian Statistician has published or publishes an annual percentage change in the deflator to a quarter in substitution for an annual percentage change in the deflator to that quarter previously published by the Australian Statistician, the publication of the later annual percentage change is to be disregarded for the purposes of this section.

(5) If, at any time, whether before or after the commencement of this section, the Australian Statistician has changed or changes the reference base for the deflator, then, for the purposes of the application of this section after the change took place or takes place, regard shall be had only to annual percentage changes published in terms of the new reference base.

(6) If, but for this subsection, the amount to be appropriated during a financial year would be an amount consisting of a number of whole dollars and a number of cents, the number of cents is to be disregarded.

PART 4—REPORT TO PARLIAMENT

Report by Minister in 1992

14. (1) The Minister, as soon as practicable after 1 July 1992, is to cause to be laid before each House of the Parliament a report on the operation of this Act since its commencement.

(2) The report is to:

(a) identify the types of programs, projects and other matters in respect of which payments were made under agreements; and

(b) contain an assessment of the extent to which each type of program, project or other matter advanced the objects of this Act.

SCHEDULE 1

Paragraph 11 (1) (a)

Item	Amount
	$
Item 1 of subdivision 3 of Division 270	440,000
Item 2 of subdivision 3 of Division 270	3,030,712
Item 9 of subdivision 6 of Division 270	1,750,000
Item 2 of subdivision 8 of Division 270	1,000,000
Item 3 of subdivision 8 of Division 270	6,698,499

SCHEDULE 2

Paragraph 11 (1) (b)

Item	Amount
	$
Item 1 of Division 849	1,235,000
Item 2 of Division 849	401,100
Item 3 of Division 849	13,271,002

[*Minister's second reading speech made in—*
House of Representatives on 2 November 1989
Senate on 13 December 1989]

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